

QA-299

Dunning Log House  
Sudlersville vicinity  
Private

early 19th century

The Dunning Log House is one of the few log dwelling houses still surviving in the county. Although documentary evidence clearly demonstrates that log buildings were common in the county in the 18th and early 19th century, few have survived. This particular building is also notable as an example of dovetailed log plank construction with evidence of stabilizing intermediate posts on the facade walls.

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Dunning Log House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

East side of Stilltown-Blanco Road, northeast of Peters Corners

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

— VICINITY OF

1st

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Queen Anne's

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

—DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

—STRUCTURE

—SITE

—OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

—PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

—BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

—IN PROCESS

—BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

—UNOCCUPIED

—WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

—YES: UNRESTRICTED

—NO

## PRESENT USE

—AGRICULTURE

—MUSEUM

—COMMERCIAL

—PARK

—EDUCATIONAL

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

—ENTERTAINMENT

—RELIGIOUS

—GOVERNMENT

—SCIENTIFIC

—INDUSTRIAL

—TRANSPORTATION

—MILITARY

—OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Laura M. Dunning

Telephone #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER

RT#1, Box 352

CITY, TOWN

Clayton

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Delaware 19938

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Queen Anne's County Courthouse

Liber #: NBW 1

Folio #: 287

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland 21617

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

—FEDERAL —STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

QA-299

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

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The Dunning log house lies on the east side of Stulltown-Blanco Road, northeast of Peters Corners. It is directly across the road from the Jackson farm (QA-34), and only several hundred yards from the Maryland-Delaware border.

The house is built in three sections, and has undergone numerous changes. The earliest part of the house is a three bay, story-and-a-half log section that presently comprises the east end of the main house. This has been raised to two full stories, and a three bay, two story frame addition has been made to the west gable of the log house. A story-and-a-half frame kitchen projects from the south facade of the log section. According to Mr. Burris (age 75),\* the present occupant, whose father worked the farm for many years, the present kitchen and the frame addition were added when his father was a young boy (c. 1880), and replaced an earlier wing which projected from the east gable of the log house.

The exterior appearance of this house belies both the log construction of the earliest house, and the complexity of the subsequent alterations.

\* June, 1978

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.1 DESCRIPTION

The earliest (east) section consists of a three bay facade facing north, with a door nearly centered on the facade, flanked by six-over-six windows. Three six-over-six windows are symmetrically ranged on the second floor. The east gable has a single six-over-six window in the southeast corner on the first and second floor, and a pair of four-light windows on either side of the chimney in the upper gable. The south facade is covered by the kitchen addition with the exception of one six-over-six window on each floor in the west bay.

The frame addition to the west gable of the log house is almost square, divided into two bays on the north facade, and three bays on the south facade. The north facade has a door in the east bay and a nine-over-six window in the west bay. The south facade has a door in the center bay and a nine-over-six window on either side of the door. The second floor windows on both facades are six-over-six. The west gable is uninterrupted by openings except for a pair of four-light windows flanking the flush brick chimney.

The kitchen addition is frame, one story high with a loft, and projects from the south facade of the log house. It is two bays long, with a screened-in porch

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.2 DESCRIPTION

on the east facade. There is a door in the north bay and a six-over-six window in the south bay of each facade. A pair of two-over-four windows flank the flush brick chimney in the attic gable of the south wall.

As previously stated, the exterior is very plain in appearance, and only the rather massive brick chimney in the east gable and the fenestration of that section of the house suggest it is more than a late-19th century tenant house.

The interior is equally plain. The early section is divided into an almost square hall at the east end, and a small, unheated chamber to the west. Entrance is made into the hall via the door in the center of the north facade. A second door lies directly opposite the front door and leads to the kitchen. According to Mr. Burris, this is not an original door, but was enlarged from a window when the kitchen was added. Mr. Burris also noted that the window in the southeast corner of the first floor was at one time a door to the earlier wing. Neither of these alterations can be verified, but opposing doors in the hall of a house such as this are quite common, so the south <sup>door</sup> may be original.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.3 DESCRIPTION

In the center of the east gable wall is a large masonry chimney. The fireplace has been blocked off and fitted for a space heater. A small, enclosed winder stair with a closet below is nestled into the alcove to the left of the chimney.

The frame addition to the west consists of a single room on each floor, with a chimney centered on the gable wall and a winder stair in the alcove to the right of the chimney. This stair rises all the way to the attic.

The interior of both sections of the house are very plainly finished. The plastered walls are dressed up by a baseboard and one section of plain, unbeaded chairrail. All interior doors and one exterior door are batten, with a mixture of materials, ranging from random-width beaded boards secured to beaded battens with wrought nails to narrow Victorian wainscotting secured to beaded battens.

The single most interesting architectural evidence that remains may be found on the second floor of the log house. Here, midway along each facade wall, are what appear to be hewn intermediate posts. These rise 2 feet one inch to 2 feet 3 inches above the floor, and are pegged into the horizontal logs in the wall. Although the entire connection is not visible, hewn logs averaging 10" wide are visible behind the wall paper below the east stair, and the

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.4 DESCRIPTION

square pegs in the "posts" are 10" on center. These posts are not present on the first floor, but fall above the first floor doors. If these posts ran down to the sill, as indeed they must have, then the doors would have to be later. This seems somewhat odd, and unless a "surgical" investigation were undertaken, this puzzle will have to remain unanswered. The height of the posts above the second floor suggests the log house was raised from one-and-one-half to two stories, and this theory is confirmed by framing evidence in the roof. Roof framing also demonstrates that the west addition was constructed as a complete frame, directly adjoining the log house. That is, the framing continues across the connecting gable wall. Included in the framing are heavy diagonal members that served to support the roof of the log house, with secondary pieces laid at a similar angle in a slightly higher position. The nailing pattern on this framing shows that the log structure was already there when the frame section was built, but that it was only one-and-one-half stories high. Nails used to secure sheathing on the upper gable of the addition remain in place, covered up by the raised roof of the log house. The roof of the log section was partially rebuilt at the time it was raised, as earlier hewn rafters secured at the peak with pegged

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.5 DESCRIPTION

mortise and tenon joints are mixed with machine sawn rafters mitred at the ridge. The earlier roof had collars half-lapped and pegged to each rafter pair, these were removed when the roof was raised. The roof pitch remained 43 to 44 degrees.

The frame kitchen addition is standard framing typical of the second half of the nineteenth century. Evidently this addition was made after the log section was raised to two stories, as the kitchen roof is framed around the existing cornice of the log house.

Although it is possible to establish most of the major alterations that occurred, it is impossible to suggest any but the most general time frame. Clearly dateable evidence is lacking, and probably would not be available with anything short of a total restoration of the building, or demolition. A suggested time frame would place the log section in the early nineteenth century, with the frame addition made during the middle third of the century, followed by the raising of the log section. The construction of the present kitchen may well date to the circa 1880 date suggested by Mr. Burris, and probably does not date after 1900. The existence of an earlier kitchen thus far rests solely on Mr. Burris' account, but could be confirmed by further investigation.



PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This seemingly plain and insignificant building is among the more interesting small vernacular structures in the county. Documentary evidence has established that log construction was quite common on the Eastern Shore in the 18th and 19th century, particularly for farm buildings and small dwelling houses. The Dunning log house is one of a small number of surviving log houses on the Eastern Shore. More important, evidence suggests that this house combines normal log construction with certain characteristics of post and plank construction. The use of intermediate posts in combination with corner notching is a previously unknown technique, and may tie in with the growing number of known examples of log construction secured at mid-wall by vertical pegs. Both of these methods are apparently aimed at keeping log plank walls rigid by tying the individual logs together vertically on side walls.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Orlando Ridout V, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Queen Anne's County Historical Society

DATE

6/9/78

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Centreville

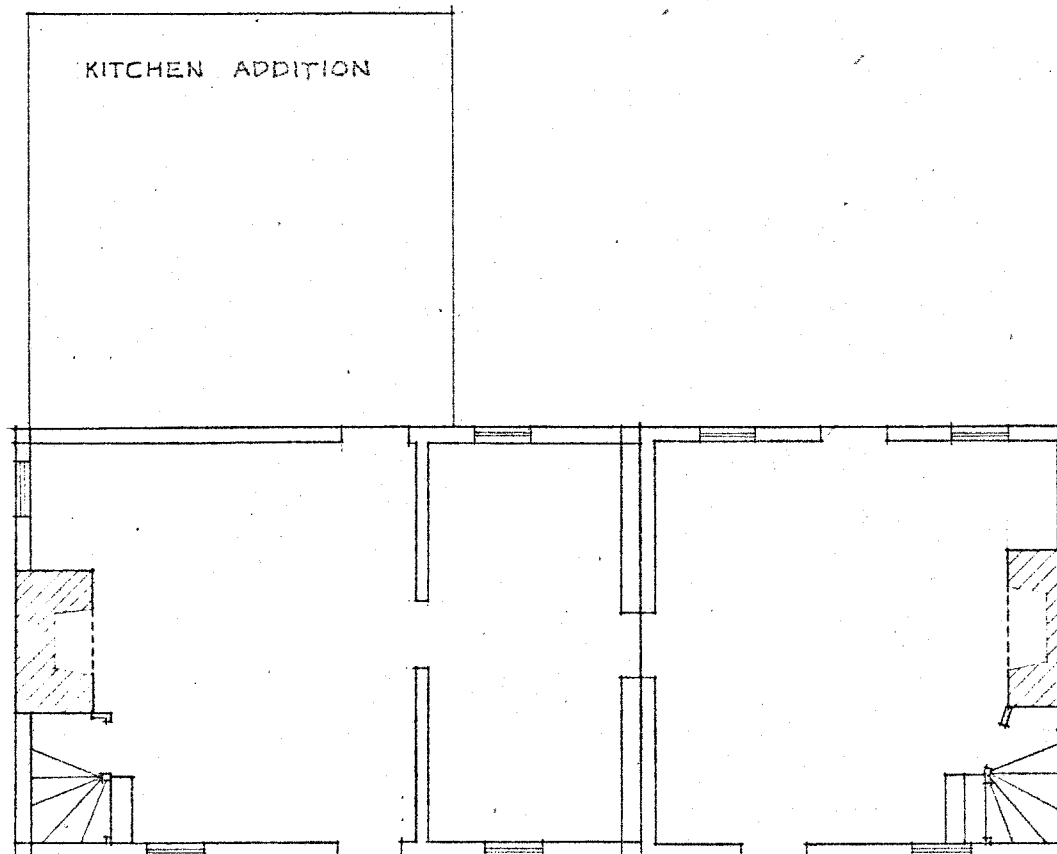
STATE

Maryland

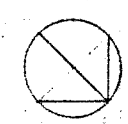
The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438



0 2 4 6 8 10  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

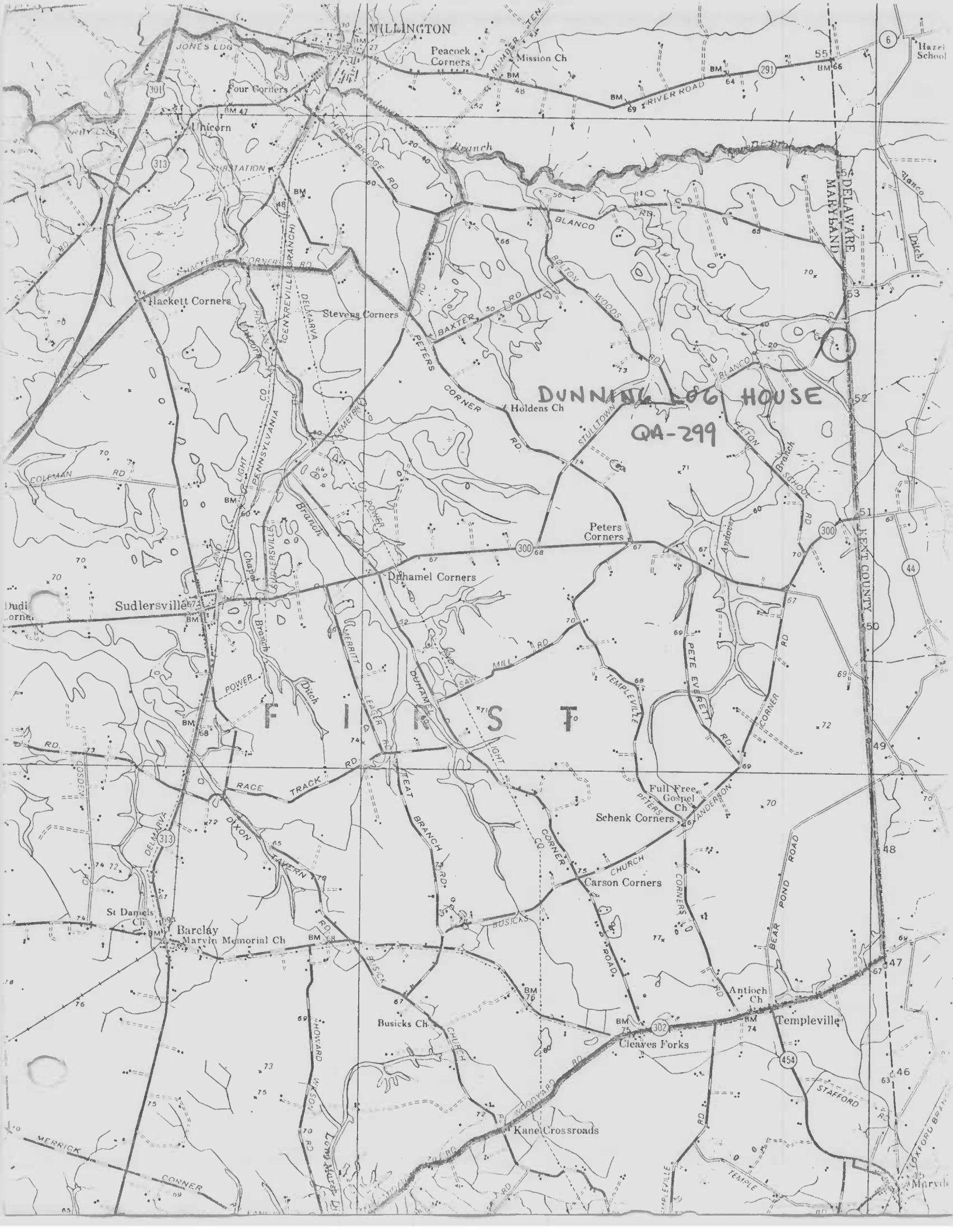


ORLANDO RIDOUT V

QA-299

DUNNING LOG HOUSE  
ANDOVER BRANCH

JUNE 5, 1973





Laura Dunning Log House

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ORV 5/1978

Neg. on file @MHT



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